

IN THE CLAIMS

The following claim set replaces all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

1- 22 (CANCELED)

23. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) A filter module which defines filtered and unfiltered material spaces, said filter module comprising a separable stack of individual self-contained filter module elements, wherein said filter module elements include:

an individual self-contained filter region formed of deep bed filter material,
and

individual self-contained first and second types of draining layers which
include a draining layer material disposed between adjacent ones
of said filter regions, wherein

- (i) said a first type of said draining layers includes a sealing element disposed at a side thereof adjacent said unfiltered material space, and flow passages disposed at an opposite side thereof adjacent said filtered material space, and
- (ii) said a second type of said draining layers includes said sealing element disposed at a side thereof adjacent said filtered material space, and includes said flow passages disposed at an opposite side thereof adjacent said unfiltered material space, wherein

said individual self-contained filter module elements are arranged in said separable stack in a predetermined order in contact with adjacent other ones of said filter module elements without gaps, such that said first and second types of draining layers alternate relative to one another in said stack so that said sealing elements thereof alternately seal the draining layers from said filtered and unfiltered material spaces, and said flow passages thereof alternately

establish flow paths between said draining layers and said filtered and unfiltered material spaces, respectively, and wherein at least one of said draining layers includes clips on an outer side thereof, and wherein at least another of said draining layers includes catch projections formed on an outer side thereof and engageable with said clips.

24. (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) Filter module as claimed in claim 23, wherein said first and second types of draining layers include flow elements for directing flow of material therethrough, and wherein said flow passages include openings formed through a portion of said flow elements.

25. (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) Filter module as claimed in claim 23, wherein said first and second types of draining layers include flow elements for directing flow of material therethrough, and wherein said flow passages include grooves formed in a portion of said flow elements.

26. (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) Filter module as claimed in claim 24 or 25, wherein at least one of said sealing elements and flow elements include connectors for establishing mutual connection between the filter region and an adjacent one of the first and/or second types of draining layers in the stack.

27. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) Filter module as claimed in claim 23, wherein said one and another ~~of said first and second types of~~ said draining layers includes clips circumferentially formed along an outer side thereof, and wherein another of said first and second types of draining layers includes catch projections circumferentially formed along an outer side thereof and engageable with said clips are adjacent in said separable stack.

28. (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) Filter module as claimed in claim 24 or 25, wherein said sealing and flow elements are formed as an integral self-contained structure with said draining layer material in a leakproof manner.

29. (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) Filter module as claimed in claim 23, wherein said sealing and flow elements are joined with and sealed to said draining layer material in a leakproof manner.

30. (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) Filter module as claimed in claim 23, wherein said filter region includes first and second filter layers having respective different degrees of separation disposed one on top of another.

31. (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) Filter module as claimed in claim 23, wherein said filter region includes first and second filter layers having the same degree of separation disposed one on top of another.

32. (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) Filter module as claimed in claim 23, wherein the filter region is formed of an absorptive filter material.

33. (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) Filter module as claimed in claim 23, wherein the filter region includes filter materials having different absorption properties.

34. (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) Filter module as claimed in claim 23, wherein at least one of said sealing elements and flow elements include connectors for establishing mutual connection between the filter regions and the draining layers in the stack

35. (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) Filter module as claimed in claim 34, wherein the connectors protrude from said sealing elements into an adjacent said filter region.

36. (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) Filter module as claimed in claim 23, wherein the draining layer material includes a plastic nonwoven material.

37. (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) Filter module as claimed in claim 24 or 25, wherein the draining layer material is integral with the sealing and flow elements thereof.

38. (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) Filter module as claimed in claim 24 or 25, wherein said sealing elements include interconnected projections and clips.

39. (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) Filter module as claimed in claim 23, wherein said filter region includes at least one planar filter layer.

40. (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) Filter module as claimed in claim 39, wherein each of said first and second types of draining layers is a planar structure.

41. (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) Filter module as claimed in claim 23, wherein said filter region comprises a plurality of individual planar filter layers.

42. (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) Filter module as claimed in claim 41, wherein at least some of the filter layers are formed of a filter material having the same filtration properties.

43. (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) Filter module as claimed in claim 41, wherein all of the filter layers are formed of a filter material having the same filtration properties.

44. (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) Filter module as claimed in claim 41, wherein at least some of the filter layers have different filtration properties as compared to others of said filter layers.

45. (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) Filter module as claimed in claim 40, wherein flow passages include holes oriented substantially parallel to the plane of the first and second types of draining layers.

46. (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) Filter module as in claim 40, wherein the flow passages include grooves oriented substantially parallel to the plane of the first and second types of draining layers.